

GOLD MINERS' ADVENTURES.

HARD TIMES IN '49.

SOME OF THE EXPERIENCES AND PRIVATIONS IN EARLY CALIFORNIA DAYS.

OUT OF THE WORLD OF CIVILIZATION—A BILL OF FARE WITH HIGH PRICES—BOOKS AND PAPERS AT A PREMIUM—HOW A "FARMER'S ALMANAC" WAS APPRECIATED.

The discovery of gold in large quantities in Alaska and the reports of large finds have stimulated travel in that direction, and excitement similar to that which prevailed in the United States when gold was discovered in California, and in England when the first reports came from the African gold fields, prevails in the far West. Mining and exploring expeditions have already started and others are being organized. New-York, Philadelphia and Chicago papers contain advertisements of "prospecting parties" which any person may join by paying an initiation fee of \$500, and adventurers are working their way toward the Pacific Coast with a view to being near the mines, if they cannot be in them.

There are many original "Forty-niners" in various parts of the United States, and many cities have organizations where the original gold-hunters meet every year to tell the stories and relate the adventures which made "the days of '49" the most important in their careers. The experiences of these men are listened to with renewed interest at this time. Many of the white-headed gold-hunters of the days of '49 believe that the risks which men take in going to the new gold fields are as nothing compared with what they did "way back in '49."

"No matter how hard they will have to work," said one old man, "the men who go to Alaska will never have to put up with what we had to go through the days when gold was first found in California. There are railroads and the telegraph now, and improvements of all kinds that bring people near to civilization, no matter how far away they may be, but in those days we got on a ship and went by way of Aspinwall and Panama, with the chances four out of ten that we should die of the fever; or we went overland in a 'prairie schooner,' with the chances about the same that we should be killed by the Indians or robbed by desperadoes. Once on the spot, we were cut off from our friends, and there was no regularity about communication with the rest of the world. California was a world for itself, and, all things considered, a pretty tough world at that, where everything, except hum in life, was high, where a man had to have his wits about him every minute and be prepared to fight for his rights."

To prove the fact that everything was high it was shown by old memorandum books that when the roads to Sacramento City were poor prices advanced in a fabulous degree. Flour sold at \$1 a pound, molasses and vinegar brought \$2 a bottle—and a small bottle at that—potatoes were quoted at \$1.50 a pound and other provisions in proportion. An Ames shovel was worth \$16 and a good pair of heavy boots were worth from \$40 to \$50.

"The chief article of food," said the storyteller, "in those days was the Chilian bean, and such was its value that in times of scarcity huge nuggets of gold were given in exchange for a bag of beans."

The following bill of fare from a primitive hotel in a mining settlement will give an idea of the cost of living:

ELDORADO HOTEL.	
Hangtown, January, 1850.	
M. ELSTNER, Proprietor.	
SOUP.	
Bean, large.....	\$1.00
Ox-Tail (short).....	1.50
ROAST.	
Beef, wild, prime cut.....	1.50
Beef, up long.....	1.00
Beef, a la mode (plain).....	1.00
Beef, with one potato (fair size).....	1.25
Beef, tame, from Arkansas.....	1.50
VEGETABLES.	
Baked beans, plain.....	.75
Baked beans, greased.....	1.00
Two potatoes (medium size).....	.50
Two potatoes, peeled.....	.75
ENTREES.	
Sauerkraut.....	1.00
Bacon, fried.....	1.00
Bacon, stuffed.....	1.25
Hash, low grade.....	.75
Hash, 18 carats.....	1.00
GAME.	
Codfish balls, per half.....	.75
Grizzly, roast.....	1.00
Grizzly, fried.....	.75
Jackass rabbit, whole.....	1.50
PASTRY.	
Rice pudding, plain.....	.75
Rice, with molasses.....	1.00
Rice, with brandy peaches.....	2.00
Square meal with dessert.....	3.00
Payable in advance.	
Gold seals on the end of the bar.	

This restaurant was in a place where the first hanging in the State had taken place.

Books and papers were at a premium. There were a few Bibles that had been brought by way of "the Horn," but that was all. It became known that a "Farmer's Almanac" had been packed with some stuff which arrived in camp, and it was quickly bought at a ridiculously high price. He who became the possessor wrote later:

I read the almanac through and through, forward and backward, sideways and upside down, and by spring had acquired such a knowledge of astronomical science that I could have located the signs of the Zodiac blindfolded, stand on my head and calculate an eclipse, foretell the condition of the weather for more than ten years ahead, and prognosticate the value of popcorn, baked peanuts and chewing-gum crops for the whole time.

THE ALASKAN NATIVES.

A RACE NEITHER INDIANS NOR ESQUIMAUS, BUT MONGOLIANS.

THEIR CIVILIZATION AND CHRISTIANIZATION BY MISSIONS—SOME OF THEIR PECULIARITIES.

White people going into Alaska are inclined to regard the aboriginal inhabitants as a branch of the great race of American Indians; yet to the anthropologist they are an absolute and distinct race, not having a drop of the blood of the American race in their veins, unless it has come from cross-breeding with the red Indians further south.

The inhabitants of Southeastern Alaska and the adjacent British possessions are purely Mongolian, and without doubt come from Japanese origin. How they came to be in America is a question that will probably never be satisfactorily answered. These people resemble the Japanese more than they do any other nation of people on the face of the globe, both in physiognomy, traits of character, build and other features. Their crude manufactures, carvings in wood and walrus ivory have a decidedly Mongolian character and bent. These people are found along the coast and to quite an extent inland from south of Sitka to north of the Yukon, where they become a mixed race, having to a

widow out of doors at once and rob her of every piece of money, clothing and other property, even to the rings on her fingers and in her ears and the bracelets on her arms. They would not even leave her a single blanket, not a piece of dried salmon, which is their bread and meat, but would strip her of everything, even to the clothing on her person, leaving her standing in the street of their village as nude as the Venus de Medici. When the wife died her relatives would treat the surviving husband in the same way, and in both cases the robbed would have to begin life over in some way. With the woman it was usually by finding another husband, and with the man by finding another wife. Mr. Warne, however, has succeeded in breaking up this practice to a great degree, and few cases now happen.

The Chilkats reckon their wealth in blankets, and a wealthy man will often accumulate as many as a thousand blankets. To add to their stock of blankets through life they would undergo any hardship, in many cases actually starving themselves to add to their accumulations.

The ordinary food eaten by the Chilkats is fresh or dried salmon, but when hungry they will often consume large quantities of lard and other fat. A storekeeper in Juneau tells of one able-bodied Chilkat who came into his store and purchased a four-quart tin of hog lard and cottonseed oil combined, and ate every drop of it before leaving the store.



A TLINGIT (ALASKA) INDIAN WOMAN.
(Copyright, 1894, by Winter & Pond.)

large extent in the Yukon country mixed with the Esquimaux, producing a race that is neither Esquimaux, Aleut nor Alaskan in the true sense of the terms.

These people can be seen in their complete purity of blood at Chilkat, on Portage Bay, Lyon Canal, about ninety miles north of Juneau. Here are situated the two missions of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, known as Haines and Chilkat missions, which are managed by the Rev. William W. Warne, who is now in the East, but who will return to Chilkat this fall.

At Chilkat there are no mixed bloods, and the people there, were it not for their dress and their aboriginal life, might readily be taken for low-caste Japanese. They are fishermen, mostly, and pay but little attention to the mines, except that many of them go to Juneau and work in the mines there as laborers for day wages.

When the Chilkat Mission was first established some six or seven years ago these people lived little better than animals, and practised the most degrading and horrible rites of fetishism as their religion. Their habitations were little better than pigsties, and often as high as twenty adults would live in a hut not more than ten feet square, with a whole regiment of dogs thrown in. Since the mission has been established, however, they have learned to build better habitations, many of them learning mechanical trades and following them, and also they have learned to wear the clothing of civilization.

With the advent of the Christian missions large numbers of the Chilkats have abandoned many of their ancient customs. In the old times they were wont to indulge in the most cruel robberies of the helpless. These cases of looting were taken by the robbed as a matter of course, as it was the custom and was expected. Whenever a man died his relatives would turn his

widow out of doors at once and rob her of every piece of money, clothing and other property, even to the rings on her fingers and in her ears and the bracelets on her arms. They would not even leave her a single blanket, not a piece of dried salmon, which is their bread and meat, but would strip her of everything, even to the clothing on her person, leaving her standing in the street of their village as nude as the Venus de Medici. When the wife died her relatives would treat the surviving husband in the same way, and in both cases the robbed would have to begin life over in some way. With the woman it was usually by finding another husband, and with the man by finding another wife. Mr. Warne, however, has succeeded in breaking up this practice to a great degree, and few cases now happen.

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to the care of the Government police, for fear that while he was gone they might be put out of the way.

The country around Chilkat is not, as many suppose, a cold country. Last winter the average temperature was 18 above zero, while in the summer the temperature rises to 78 degrees. Potatoes, turnips, rutabagas, beets and other hardy vegetables grow there in profusion, but the summer season is not long enough for the ripening of fruits, tomatoes, corn, beans, onions and such vegetables. Rye, wheat and buckwheat will grow and ripen, but oats and other grains do not do well. There is plenty of grass and good hay. As to ice, that is never seen in the inlets and bays on which Haines Mission, Juneau and Chilkat are situated, as the warm Japan current prevents that as well as preventing the severe winters.

The steamers which land passengers for the Clondyke do so within sight of the Presbyterian missions at Haines and Chilkat, and many miners going and coming stop at the mission-houses. Mr. Warne believes that the future great city of Alaska must be situated at Chilkat, which is at the head of Portage Bay, where the land journey through Chilkat Pass, the route of the future to the gold fields, begins. Next summer there will unquestionably be a wagon road constructed through this pass to the gold diggings, five hundred miles distant. This can be kept open most of the year, while the Yukon River is choked with ice and frozen solid. The trip through the Chilkat Pass, which is an all-land route, is much safer than the one by the way of Dyea, through the Chilkat Pass, although a little longer. It has been made from the missions to the gold diggings by men on foot in summer in fourteen days.

The influence the rush to the gold fields will have upon the aboriginal inhabitants at Chilkat and other places is not hard to foretell. The men are neither lazy nor shiftless like the Indians, but quick witted, intelligent and quick to learn and imitate the whites. They will lay aside their savage life, and in the future this race will emerge from its heathenism and perhaps become a thrifty, industrious, law-abiding race of people. In fact, every indication at present points to that ultimate result, as many of them are already possessed of considerable wealth, run sawmills, are lumbermen and are working in the mines. Particularly are those who have been brought under the influence of the Christian missions thrifty and rapidly accumulating wealth. In the near future the United States Government will be called upon to deal with the question as to whether these people shall be citizens or not. They are not Orientals, though unquestionably of Mongolian origin. They are not Esquimaux, neither are they Indians. They are not white, neither are they black. They are to the soil native, but do not belong to the proscribed races to whom citizenship is denied. Many of them own and occupy property which, when the country is organized, will be taxed. The Government will be asked to fix their status, no doubt, in the near future.

GOLD FINDS ALL THE TIME.

CUSTOMERS FOR MINING MACHINERY CONSTANTLY IN EVIDENCE.

"The Alaska mining boom," said a dealer in engines, boilers and machinery, "has received such liberal advertising that people in all parts of the country have contracted the gold fever; but only a few of the enthusiasts know that gold 'finds' are reported every few months, and that expeditions to new gold fields leave New-York several times a year. About a year ago a little vessel, much like a pilot boat, sailed from Brooklyn with men and machinery for a gold field on an island near Cape Horn. We put aboard a boiler, a centrifugal pump, hoisting machinery, rubber hose and eighteen quick-firing rifles. The leader of the expedition had samples of gold which he had taken from the sand on the borders of the island, where he hoped to find much more. The rich sand, according to his story, was always submerged, and had to be scooped from the water and then washed.

"But we have gold-mining customers whose find is nearer than the Horn. About six months ago two men came to our place, whose appearance indicated that they had been roughing it for a long time. They looked about and whispered, and finally one of them said that they were looking for an engine and a pump. He hesitated when we asked about his business, but conquered his timidity and said: 'Well, to be square with you, we've struck gold and struck it rich, and must have machinery to help us along.' Then he showed a number of samples of gold in dust and ore with the Assay Office's certificate of their worth. The men paid for the machinery and it was forwarded to their place in North Carolina, where they are now at work, with how much success no one knows.

"These are only a few of the instances that have come under our observation in a year, but they demonstrate the fact that there are gold miners at work outside the districts which are known as the gold regions."

FIREPROOF BABIES.

From Answers.

A doctor residing in the East End of London has discovered a solution which renders clothing absolutely fireproof. "By this discovery," he says, "the appalling loss of life in babies by being burned will be minimized."

The formula represents a prescription consisting of 5 per cent alum and 5 per cent phosphate of ammonia, which renders the substance absolutely non-inflammable. All that is necessary is to steep the clothing in this solution, and the tissues so treated will resist the flames.